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# SEASONABLE CONSIDERATIONS ON THE Preſent WAR in *Scotland*, AGAINST THE REBELS:

In which the

Situation of the *Highlands* are truly deſcrib'd;

The FORCE of their

INHABITANTS fairly computed;

And the ADVANTAGES of the

KING's TROOPS, in Point of Diſcipline and Manner of FIGHTING, fully demonſtrated.

IN A

LETTER to a Perſon of DISTINCTION.

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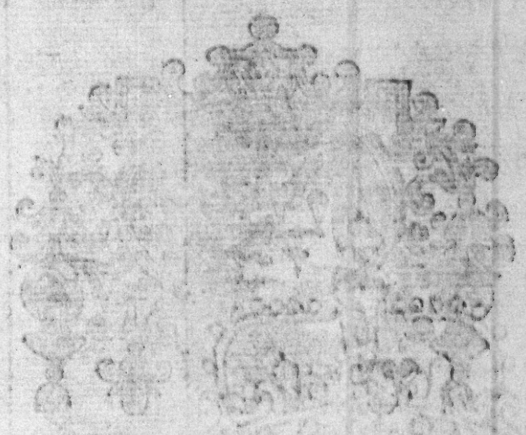

# LETTERS:

ON

# CONSIDERATIONS

# A LETTER TO A Perſon of DISTINCTION.

IT muſt be confeſs'd, Sir, that there is nothing more natural to the Multitude, than to be *miſled* in their Notion of Things by Accidents, and the Reports which follow them, of which we have never had ſtronger Inſtances, than ſince the Breaking out of the preſent Rebellion in *Scotland*. At firſt it was look'd upon as a Thing below Notice, and for ſeveral Weeks People were in doubt here, whether there was any Riſing in that Country at all; and the general Sentiment was, That in caſe the *Highlanders* did draw together, a handful of Regular Troops would eaſily and ſpeedily diſperſe them; and this was the more readily believed, becauſe of the great Streſs that had been laid formerly on the Diſarming the *Highlanders*, and making Roads thro' their Country; but the Marching of a Body of 4000 Men down to *Edinburgh*, and what follow'd ſoon after the Defeat of General *Cope*, rais'd the Credit of the *Highlanders* ſo much, that from being a low and deſpicable Rabble, they ſwell'd of a ſudden into daring and intrepid Troops, which Character they chiefly derived from the Reports of thoſe whom they had defeated. On their March into *England*, our Apprehenſions rather encreas'd, and they were ſtill thought capable of performing great Feats, till they were oppos'd: But when on the firſt Approach of the Duke's Army, they began to retire, and ſhew'd in that Retreat a Quickneſs that border'd cloſely upon Precipitation, our Ideas were very ſuddenly changed, and every Body was perſuaded, that how much ſoever they might out-do the King's Troops in marching, there was no Danger of their doing any thing by Fighting, and from a Belief that they were a People ſo intrepid as to engage any Troops, we were brought to think they would never engage at all. But ſince we have been deceived in this, as well as in our other Notions, it may not be amiſs to throw common Opinion out of the Caſe,

Caſe, and endeavour to learn, from more rational Grounds, what the Nature of that Country is, to which the Scene of War is transferred; what Force theſe People can bring into the Field, and what Grounds there are to believe that they are a Match for Regular Troops, under the Command of Officers of ſuch eſtabliſh'd Reputation for Courage, and of ſuch known Abilities in their Profeſſion, as thoſe that command the King's Troops at this Juncture.

This, Sir, I take to be a Matter of great Importance, and therefore I ſhall with ſtrict Impartiality endeavour to ſtate theſe ſeveral Points, in order to ſhew, that tho' there may be, and certainly is, the beſt Grounds in the World for taking juſt and proper Precautions againſt the Deſigns of theſe People; yet there are no Grounds at all to apprehend, that they either are, or humanly ſpeaking, can be formidable to this Nation, or capable of doing any thing ſo much to our Prejudice as either juſtly to alarm us at Home, or prejudice us in that Opinion, which both our Allies and our Enemies ought to entertain of us Abroad. This I think the more neceſſary, becauſe falſe Fears may have infinitely worſe Conſequences, as to our domeſtick and foreign Credit, than any Thing theſe *Highlanders* can do, even ſuppoſing them to be well armed, well paid, and perfectly unanimous; which, however, is directly the Reverſe of the Circumſtances they are in.

In the firſt Place I ſhall obſerve, that there is nothing more falſe than the Notion induſtriouſly propagated, that all *Scotland* is engaged in this Rebellion; whereas, in Fact, it is not an eaſy Matter to ſay what Part of *Scotland* is engag'd in it; for hitherto no one Town or Port has declared in Favour of the Rebels; but taking it in its greateſt Latitude, we can only ſuppoſe, that the People of the *Highlands* are engag'd therein. Now the *Highlands* lie in the Middle of *Scotland*, and may be divided from the Southern Part of that Kingdom, by a Line drawn acroſs the Iſthmus at *Stirling*; ſo that we may ſafely pronounce the Rebels to have no Influence on the Country lying nearer to us than that Town, unleſs by Force. On the North, again their Power may be bounded by a Line croſs the Iſthmus, which is terminated on the Eaſt Side by *Inverneſs*, the Front of which Line cannot exceed eight Miles in breadth, which may therefore be eaſily guarded by the Inhabitants of the Northern Counties of *Caithneſs*, *Sutherland*, *Roſs*, *Strathnaver*, &c. which were never eſteem'd diſaffected. Taking Things therefore in this Light, it will appear that they have not above a third Part of the Kingdom of *Scotland* under their Influence, and that the worſt Part of it too, in all reſpects, ſince it is Mountainous, Barren, has very few Ports, and lies in ſuch a Manner, as that thoſe who inhabit it may be in a great Meaſure impriſon'd within theſe Bounds, which would alone go a great Way towards reducing them, ſince it is certain, that if this were once the Caſe, they muſt diſband and diſperſe for want of Subſiſtance. All that I have ſaid is indiſputable Truth, as every Man, who is acquainted with *Scotland*, muſt allow; and yet it differs widely from what paſſes for Truth amongſt thoſe who would be thought to talk knowingly upon this Subject.

But tho' the *Highlands* may be pretty near a third Part of that Kingdom, yet for the Reaſons before aſſign'd, they can ſcarce be thought the moſt populous Part; for in a Country that is neither well cultivated, nor has any great Share of Trade, it is impoſſible the Inhabitants ſhould be numerous; but becauſe I would be as particular as it is poſſible, I will endeavour to aſcertain

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the Number of People in the *Highlands*. According to the beſt Computations that I have met with, there may be in the whole Kingdom about a Million of People, and of theſe I reckon the *Highlanders* may be a ſixth Part, and I am perſuaded, this is rather more than leſs than they are. But let us take them at one hundred and ſixty Thouſand, Men, Women and Children; and then if every Perſon capable of bearing Arms were brought into the Field, they might amount to twenty-five Thouſand Men; but then if we conſider, that at leaſt one half of the *Highland* Clans, are either neutral or well-affected, and that there are fewer Chiefs in this, than there were in the laſt Rebellion, we may very fairly and juſtly conclude on theſe Grounds, that the Rebels can hardly bring twelve Thouſand into the Field; but at the moſt, and by all the Methods they can uſe, ſuppoſing they do not leave a ſerviceable Man at Home, not above fifteen Thouſand, whatever we may have heard to the contrary.

With reſpect to the Diſcipline of the *Highlanders*, we are to conſider, that whatever it is, it is unalterable, they cannot change or mould their Bodies of Men into different Forms, as other Nations do, but every Clan, be it more or leſs, is a Battalion, commanded by the Chief, or one who repreſents him, and under him, by the principal Perſons of his Family. In the next Place, it is certain, that they know nothing of intrenching, fortifying, raiſing Magazines, or, in ſhort, of the regular Art of War, and all that they can do, is either by ſudden Incurſions, or by Engagements; Sieges they can neither make nor ſtand. If we conſider them in this Light therefore, it is very plain that they have no better Chance for Advantages than other Men, and if by Chance they do gain Advantages, they are leſs able to make any great Uſe of them; this, I ſay, Reaſon teaches us, and Experience has, and ever will confirm. We may add to this, that they have no Horſe, and that they cannot defend themſelves againſt Horſe; that is to ſay, in any Country where Horſe can act, and where Horſe and Dragoons will act in a manner that may be expected from Troops under good Diſcipline. It is not therefore very eaſy to conceive how Perſons of good Senſe and ſound Judgment can be ſo far wrought upon as to deſert both, in order to receive an Opinion ſo ill grounded, as that theſe People ſhould, for any Time, reſiſt a regular and well-diſciplin'd Army of equal Force, much leſs gain any Advantages, or make any Conqueſts, when oppos'd by an Army, ſuperior in Number, made up of old Regiments, commanded by Officers of great Experience, perfectly well paid, and ſupply'd with every Thing that themſelves can deſire, and that theſe People, inferior to them in every reſpect, are known and allow'd to want.

The only Anſwer given to this, and indeed the only Anſwer that can be given, is, the Impetuoſity of their firſt Charge, and a ſuppos'd Advantage they derive from their manner of fighting with Swords and Targets; and yet when theſe come to be fairly examined, it will be found, that they are among the Number of thoſe Things which ought to be reckon'd diſadvantageous to the *Highlanders*; for it muſt be allow'd, that this Impetuoſity of their Charge obliges them to attack in a looſe Order, and this cannot but expoſe them, and that exceſſively too, to the firm and cloſe Bodies of our Battalions; ſo that breaking as they do with their own Charge, they muſt be very ſoon thrown into Confuſion, when puſh'd by thoſe who obſerve a more regular and cloſer Diſcipline. But this is not all, for this looſe Order of theirs is not an Evil

only, but an Evil without Remedy, an Evil that no Experience can correct, much leſs cure for Men who fight with Broad-Swords muſt have room to uſe them: This is plain and evident to whoever will allow himſelf Time to conſider it, and it is for want of conſidering, that Numbers have thought otherwiſe. Yet at the Bottom, the great Difference between regular and irregular Troops in all Ages, and in all Nations, is the Difference here put, between *Highlanders* and *Britiſh* Soldiers; the former depend upon Impetuoſity and Strength, in which it is certain they are not at all ſuperior to other Men; and the other upon Firmneſs, Courage and Diſcipline, which are thoſe Things that do, and only can make one Body of Men ſuperior to another. On the whole, therefore, it requires nothing but Attention, Impartiality, and Common Senſe to be ſatisfied, that what has been trumpeted about of their Superiority, is idle, abſurd, and ridiculous.

But it will be objected, that ſay what you will, they are better Swordſmen, and what then? the Buſineſs is not to be diſputed upon a Stage, but in the Field, and the Broad-Sword is not oppoſed to another Sword, but to a Muſquet and Bayonet, and therefore let us ſee how theſe Weapons differ. The Broad-Sword is dreadful, but the Bayonet is deadly; it is the Edge of the Sword that cuts, but the Point of the Bayonet kills; a Man may live that has his Cheek cut off, but not with a Wound through the Vitals. So much for the Weapon; now for the Force with which it is uſed; the Sword is managed by one Arm, the Muſquet and Bayonet is thruſt by both; the one may be eſcaped, the other is irreſiſtable; the Blow of the former is ſlow, and muſt be perceiv'd, the Thruſt of the latter is quick, and felt as ſoon as ſeen: Then conſider another thing, the very Force with which the Stroke is made, requires Time and Strength to recover it, but the Puſh is a ſingle Motion, withdrawn and return'd in a Moment; ſo that as Experience will demonſtrate to the Eye, a Foot-Soldier may thruſt thrice, in the Time a *Highlander* makes a Stroke, and is in the Poſture to make another. There is no need therefore of deviſing new Modes, or of reviving old and obſolete Methods of Fighting, to encounter theſe Men, thoſe that are in uſe are more than ſufficient, and whoever ſays he thinks otherwiſe, may be fairly preſum'd not to have thought at all.

Theſe, Sir, are my ſincere Sentiments upon this Subject, which I have given you in as few Words as it is poſſible, and without digreſſing in the leaſt from the Points I undertook to explain; as to the Facts, I am ſure of them; and as to my Arguments, if you will conſult ſuch as are vers'd in Military Diſcipline, I am very well ſatisfied they will allow them to have Weight; it is one thing to declaim upon Subjects in looſe and general Terms, and quite another to reaſon upon them from Self-evident and incontrovertible Principles; the one may gain a Man ſome Reputation in popular Aſſemblies, and in general Converſation, but when his Opinion is requir'd in Writing, ſuch Diſcourſes will be eaſily ſeen through, and have no more regard ſhewn them, than they deſerve.

What I would infer, Sir, from all this, lies in a very narrow Compaſs, and may be reduced to theſe three Points; *Firſt*, That however neceſſary, juſt and reaſonable it may be to provide for the Extinction of this Flame, we may ſafely do it with Caution and Prudence, and without being at all diſconcerted

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by the Intervention of any little Accidents that may happen. *Secondly*, That there is nothing in this Diſpute, that ought to raiſe any ſuch a Degree of Terror or Apprehenſion, as in the leaſt to affect Publick Credit, which is a Thing that depends upon the Security of the Government, which is very little indangered by this Diſpute. *Thirdly*, That while it ſubſiſts, tho' it may and ought to claim a reaſonable Degree of Care and Attention from this Nation, yet it ought not to engroſs our Thoughts, or divert us from thoſe Views and Objects, which are of the utmoſt Conſequence to the Glory and Proſperity of *Great Britain*. A Man may take care of his Health, without neglecting his Buſineſs, if the one is needful, the other is no leſs neceſſary, and we muſt not only provide for the Suppreſſion of this Rebellion, but for the humbling that Power which excited it, and thereby preventing Rebellions in Time to come. Thus, as you deſired, you have my Thoughts upon this Subject, in the freeſt and moſt candid manner, and thoſe who are beſt acquainted with it, will tell you, that I have repreſented to you nothing, that is not reaſonable in itſelf, and which will not be verified by the Event.

*I am, SIR,*

*With profound Eſteem*, &c.